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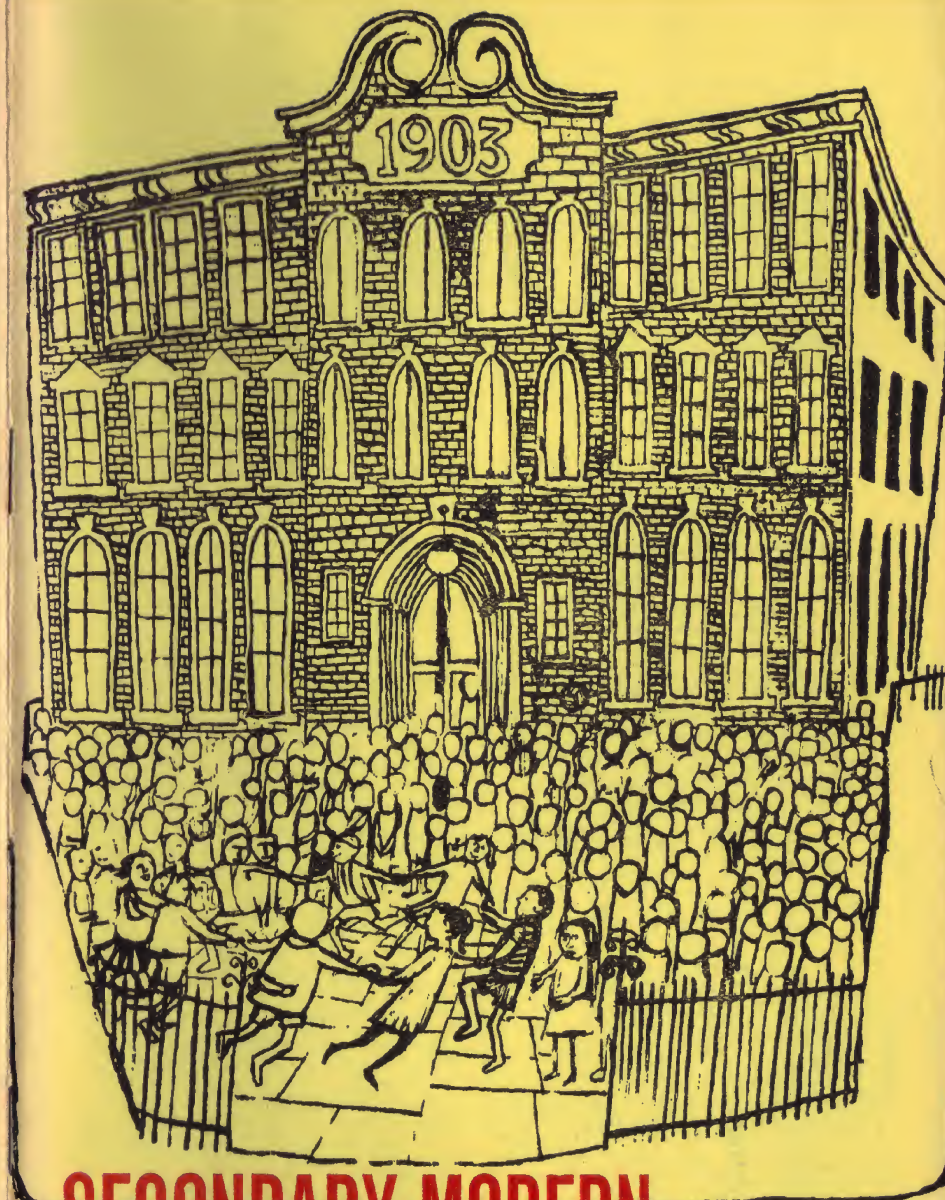
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**SECONDARY MODERN**

**ANARCHY 21**

A JOURNAL  
OF ANARCHIST IDEAS

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## Contents of No. 21

November 1962

Secondary Modern	John Ellerby	321
Jug and clay, or flower?	Anthony Weaver	325
6F. Geog.	Anthony Blond	329
Pops in the classroom	Judith Tudor Hart	332
Tomorrow's Audience	John Duncan	335
A charter for the unfree child	Martin Daniel	337
The Sillitoe thesis	David Downes	346
Reflections on authority	Jeremy Westall	350
Reflections on freedom	John C. A. Davey	351

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Picture story on pp. 342-343 by Chris & Ernie

### Other issues of ANARCHY

1. Sex-and-Violence; Galbraith; the New Wave, Education,
2. Workers' Control.
3. What does anarchism mean today?; Africa; the Long Revolution;
4. De-institutionalisation; Conflicting strains in anarchism.
5. 1936: the Spanish Revolution.
6. Anarchy and the Cinema.
7. Adventure Playgrounds.
8. Anarchists and Fabians; Action Anthropology; Eroding Capitalism;
9. Prison.
10. Sillitoe's Key to the Door; MacInnes on Crime; Augustus John's Utopia; Committee of 100
11. Paul Goodman; Neill on Education; the Character-Builders.
12. Who are the anarchists?
13. Direct Action.
14. Disobedience.
15. The work of David Wills
16. Ethics of anarchism; Africa; Anthropology; Poetry of Dissent.
17. Towards a lumpenproletariat: Education vs. the working class; Freedom of access; Benevolent bureaucracy; CD and CND.
18. Comprehensive Schools.
19. Theatre: anger and anarchy.
20. Non-violence as a reading of history; Freud, anarchism and experiments in living.

### Correction

In the article "Non-violence" in ANARCHY 20, the first word in the last paragraph on p.289 should be "expedience" not "experience".

### Universities and Colleges

Now that a new academic year is beginning we should be very glad if anyone willing to act as an ANARCHY agent in his/her University, Training College, or College of Further Education would write to let us know how many copies he/she would like to take on a sale-or-return basis.

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## Secondary Modern

*The miner, still sweat on his brow and dirt from the pit.  
The fence old, worn and broken, singing a song of wonders  
And the bird singing a song of scorn.  
And the children, happy now  
But what after they reach the gate of their home?*

—13-YEAR-OLD from a "rather weak middle stream"  
in a Leeds secondary modern school

Practically everybody treats you like a scruff.

—14-YEAR-OLD from form 4E  
in a West Riding secondary modern school

EVERYONE KNOWS A SECONDARY MODERN CHILD: there are so many of them. Three quarters of the children in this country receive a secondary modern education on leaving their primary schools. When, under the slogan, "secondary education for all", the 1944 Education Act turned the senior departments of the old elementary schools into "secondary modern" schools, as from 1st April, 1945, nothing was changed. The children, the teachers and the buildings were the same. Some of the schools had been foreshadowing the kind of work associated with the idea of secondary education freed from the grammar school strait-jacket of university entrance requirements for years, others developed it slowly. Some haven't developed it yet. In April, 1947, the leaving age was raised to 15. Soon afterwards the first of the emergency-trained teachers came into the schools, bringing ideas and attitudes from other occupations than teaching. Today, seventeen years after the secondary modern schools began their official existence, about a third of the 4,000 odd such schools in England and Wales are in post-war buildings or in pre-war buildings "reasonably appropriate for secondary education". The rest inhabit what the NUT called "a mass of out-of-date elementary schools completely unsuited to modern educational needs".

When ANARCHY published its recent issue on comprehensive schools, several contributors mentioned the impossibility of generalizing about them, they were all so different. Exactly how many of them are of the kind described in Edward Blishen's *The Roaring Boys*, or exactly how many are really better schools than the socially-esteemed grammar schools of the same neighbourhood is impossible to say. A far greater proportion than either are probably places of which the best, and worst, that can be said is that they fail to make an impression



on the majority of the children who pass through them before joining our nation of semi-literate conformists—a nation, as Michael Young puts it, “of failures with only a thin élite of super-trained people at the top.” (In purely economic terms, this has been expressed by John Vaizey (*The Cost of Education*) in his finding that “A grammar school child receives 70 per cent more per year in expenditure than a child in a secondary modern school, and nearly double per school life.”).

The secondary modern school has been a centre of controversy since its inception, but in the course of time the controversies have changed. In the early days there were on the one hand those who thought that the task of the school should be, as it had been, in the days of the senior elementary schools, to develop the “three R’s” and ensure that every child on leaving could cope adequately with reading, writing and arithmetic. In the conditions of the immediate post-war years, with children whose primary schooling had been subject to every kind of wartime disruption, this was not an unworthy aim, even though it strikes us as pathetically limited.

On the other hand, were those schools which sought to bring to life the aspiration voiced in the Ministry of Education’s 1947 pamphlet *The New Secondary Education*, “to provide a good all-round secondary education, not focussed primarily on the traditional subjects of the school curriculum, but developing out of the interests of the children.” Of the schools in this group, Professor Dent in his *Secondary Modern Schools*, distinguishes two types: those who taught the academic subjects in the same way, but to a less advanced level, as the grammar schools, and allocated proportionately more time to art, handicrafts and various social activities; and those who

departed to a greater or less degree from both the traditional academic subject divisions and the traditional methods of handling the academic subjects. Some of these schools—though I believe a constantly diminishing number—built their curricula largely upon ‘projects’ or ‘centres of interest’; for example, a neighbourhood survey or a co-operative study of some large topic, such as building, transport, clothes or housing. These schools relied upon the diverse content of the project or centre of interest to provide exercises in all the school subjects, both academic and practical.

Explaining why he thinks the number of such schools is diminishing, he goes on to say that “There was from about 1950 onwards in the Secondary Modern School a widespread trend away from unconventional approaches and methods. This was, I believe, in large part the direct result of external pressures brought to bear upon the Modern School: pressures caused by public concern about the standards of attainment and behaviour in some of the schools, and more especially about the standards of literacy.” (He also mentions that project work is much more exacting in its demands on the teacher’s time and energy than conventional class teaching).

The social pressures on the schools were real enough, but I think they were of a different kind. With the higher levels of social and occupational expectation in the nineteen-fifties and sixties, parents who in an earlier generation would not have had such aspirations for their children, are bitterly disappointed when they fail to gain admission to

the grammar school, and want them to be given an opportunity to gain the educational requirements for those occupations to which the grammar school normally leads. In other words, and this brings us to the current version of the secondary modern controversy, they want their children to sit for the General Certificate of Education examinations at Ordinary Level. More and more secondary modern children do in fact stay beyond the minimum leaving age of fifteen, and more and more do in fact sit for the GCE.

This in turn had led to the demand for a leaving examination for those children who do not sit for the GCE, which has been met either by entering the children for examinations held by private examining bodies (in spite of disapproval by the Ministry) or by local organised and recognised school-leaving examinations.

The Beloe Committee, which reported two years ago, found that if the existing examining bodies are allowed to go on unchecked, there is a very real danger of damage to the curriculum and teaching of secondary schools using these examinations. It urged the government to encourage and help provide a new sort of examination to be administered by 20 regional examining bodies. Such an examination will probably be operating by 1965. Meanwhile the number of secondary modern pupils taking the GCE examination increases year by year.

But it is precisely those who are most concerned with the “average” as well as the below average, who are concerned about the effect of our contemporary examination fever. The grammar schools are dominated by university entrance requirements (it would be difficult to say what educational advances have been made in *them* over the last thirty or forty years) and as Miss Miles, headmistress of Mayfield School pointed out a month ago, it is ironical that the GCE was now tyrannising the curricula of every type of school. The public judge secondary modern and comprehensive schools as well as grammar schools by their GCE results, because of the misguided belief that to be examined was to be educated. The opponents of the Beloe idea fear that the “C” stream children, already handicapped, already given the largest classes, the worst accommodation and the most inexperienced teachers, would become, as David Holbrook puts it “the new untouchables, without a ticket”. Margaret Maison wrote recently in the *Times Educational Supplement*.

In this fiendishly competitive, exam-mad, class-ridden, status-hypnotized England children need to be protected from the demands of society in general and of their parents in particular. If the teachers will not help them, who will?

I have known scores of parents whose ignorance is as colossal as their snobbery and to whom a child’s pass in one GCE subject is a major status symbol. (Hence the number of expensive and utterly tenth-rate private schools now catering for this social appetite). I have known scores of families whose members are encouraged to compete madly for so many Os and As without reference to any future career but solely as a means of keeping up with the Joneses.

I am convinced that any increase in the number of conventional external examinations, especially at sub-GCE levels, will bring only further chaos, competition and snobbery into the educational scene; the ruin of the child,

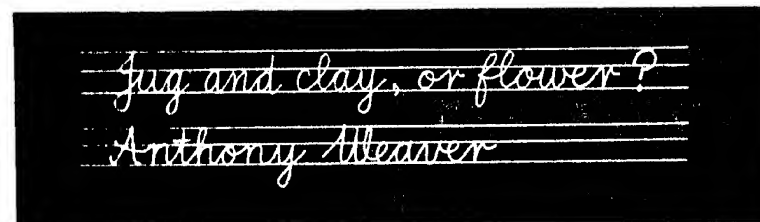
begun at 11-plus, will be complete; teachers will be exam. coaches only (replaceable by computers of course) and education will be nothing but the dreary business of pumping muddy information into unretentive sieves.

Happily there are other, genuinely educational trends at work in the secondary modern schools. There is the work of the Guild of Teachers of Backward Children, whose chairman, Mr. S. S. Segal has done so much to help change attitudes to the "11-plus rejects". There is the work of the Society for Education Through Art, gradually permeating the whole field of the education of the senses. And there is the approach to the English language which Mr. Denys Thompson has been propagating for years in the journal *The Use of English* and its predecessor *English in Schools*. In 1933 Thompson and F. R. Leavis wrote a book *Culture and Environment* which sowed the seeds of a whole tradition in teaching. In one direction it leads to the kind of work in which David Holbrook has been active, in another it leads to the semantic approach advocated for secondary modern schools by Harold Drasdo in his stimulating article "The Language of Persuasion" in *ANARCHY* 19, and in another to the whole trend of teaching by drawing out critical and discerning responses to the mass media. (Our readers will have caught a glimpse of this in the interview with an "early leaver" published in *ANARCHY* 18). The British Film Institute and the Society for Education in Film and Television are building up a body of experience of classroom work of this kind.\*

If you saw the recent BBC Television documentary by Richard Cawston, "The Schools", you will remember the fascinating sequence in which a teacher of English was drawing out his pupils' vocabulary by blowing bubbles. A television critic in one of the weeklies assumed that the teacher "only did this because it was a secondary modern class, the implication being that the kids were pretty dim and needed visual aids." This drew the teacher out of his anonymity (and he turned out to be Mr. Peter Emmens of the Margaret Tabor Secondary School, Braintree, which is the school where the headmaster abolished prefects so as to encourage the pupils to be responsible for themselves), to point out that "I teach English through the senses for the sole reason that I believe it to be the right method. The best way to teach any any abstract concept is through a concrete illustration, and creative writing is certainly best encouraged by the stimulation of the imagination, through a liberating and enriching sense-experience. I should use the same method in a grammar school."

Perhaps the really valuable advances in educational technique *will* come from the modern schools, in spite of the shadow of the examiners. Denys Thompson, who is now a headmaster in Yeovil declared that the aim of educators should be "to turn out misfits" meaning that by *unfitting* pupils for their environment, they can hope to change it. We, as anarchists, can hardly disagree with him.

\*see "Teaching and Discrimination" by Paddy Whannel (in *Forum*, Spring 1961), "Teaching and Discrimination—A Classroom Approach" by Tony Higgins and Don Waters (in *Forum*, Autumn 1961), "Teaching Discrimination" by D. Leech in *Screen Education*, Jan.-Feb., 1962) and a reply to the last article, by Don Waters in *Screen Education*, May-June, 1962).



JUG AND CLAY, OR FLOWER? The young child's mind may be likened to a jug into which the teacher pours information, as much or as little and of the kind that he thinks fit. This ancient conception regards the mind as a vessel which should be made, by force if necessary, to hold what is ordained by tradition to be the best content for it. Similarly the child's character is regarded as some plastic material separate from the faculties of his mind, to be moulded into shape—by the teacher himself, and by the type of group discipline exerted, according to definite ideas of what is good form. The child is not only moulded into a pattern but comes to feel that conformity is desirable and that divergence from it is idiosyncratic, suspect and subversive.

It is easy to recognise such an educational system in the extreme form of totalitarian politics or religion. Nazi teachers vowed, "Adolf Hitler, we swear that we will train the youth of Germany so that they will grow up in your ideology, for your aims and purposes, and in the direction set by your will. This is pledged to you by the whole German system of education, from the primary school through to the university." Napoleon's attitude to education was much the same, and it is summed up in his observation that "there will be no fixed political state if there is no teaching body with fixed principles." Everyone knows the maxim of the Jesuits that given a child for the first seven years of his life they will so form his mind and character that no later influence will be of fundamental importance.

It is perhaps less recognisable that any State- or Church-provided education tends to an authoritarianism that is different only in degree from these extreme examples. The welfare of the state in economic competition with other states requires skilled technicians. So in Britain opportunities are now increasingly provided for anyone with the ability to take G.C.E. or other locally organised examinations.

It is rare to meet teachers of Religious Knowledge who do not

*ANTHONY WEAVER* who is senior lecturer in education at White-lands College, taught for ten years at Burgess Hill School, and after a spell in LCC secondary schools and at a Lycée in France, was head teacher at a school for maladjusted children and then warden of a residential clinic. He is the author of *They Steal for Love*, and of *War Outmoded*, and has contributed to several issues of *ANARCHY*.

feel that they should use their position in school to bring their children to adopt their own beliefs.

The analogy of the flower suggests an upbringing that enables a person to blossom in his own way. The gardener's job is to provide the most appropriate soil and nourishment that he knows of, and to protect the tender plant from extremes of frost and scorching heat. On the one hand we admit that we cannot know all the possibilities of development that children are capable of. Hence we have no wish to cast them into the mould of some chosen image. On the other hand to value is, synonymously, to trust: we need neither inflate nor fear what we fully accept. Every person is not only unique but of intrinsic value.

To strive after Truth "excludes the use of violence", Gandhi asserted, "because man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth, and therefore cannot be competent to punish". As one's opponent must be weaned from error, so education may be regarded as a continual process of ever progressive weaning from contentment with earlier levels of satisfaction—in love, in social relations and in means of expression. The satisfaction of these basic needs, by suitable means and as they arise, should be the concern of parents and educators: instead so many of us worry about future status, about qualifications, about ends.

C. S. Lewis has explained that love is compounded of friendship, affection, eros and charity. The child needs to experience all these phases of love as a two way process between himself and his parents. How many people have been stunted in emotional growth because their parents have been unwilling or unable to receive their love? The first all embracing relationship with mother, however, must eventually come to an end, and will do so best to the extent that it has been fully entered into, exploited and enjoyed. Then weaning will be achieved without anxiety or regret. And it will be eased and accelerated by the acceptance of what are at first regarded as substitutes—play and companionship.

Play as a means of "free expression" may have therapeutic value as a method of catharsis of the emotions. But to become creative it must be based on authentic experience and it must be embodied in significant form. This a man may achieve through works for the transformation of social conditions or of human relationships, as well as through art in drama, dance, design and craft. The task of education is to enable each child to discover the mode of expression that is valid for him—"to discover his own harmony and live by it", said Eric Gill.

The history of civilisation is a memorial to man's continual need to express and assert himself. Woman perhaps has played less part in this because by having a baby she performs an incontestably creative act. Man has to find some other way. Destructiveness, cruelty, aggression, abuse of power can all be seen as the obverse of creativity, due to a mixture of emotional deprivation, in early childhood or in later sex life, and to atrophied means of expression.

Herbert Read, in *Education for Peace*, seriously discusses the proposition that mankind must be predisposed for peace by the right kind

of education. "It is precisely the significance of the process of identification that is our present concern", he writes. "When Freud says that a path leads by way of imitation to empathy\* he may or may not have been aware that he was indicating the path of art. It is true that there is another path—identification with the leader—the totalitarian path in which there is no empathic relationship with other people but only blind obedience to command. The process by which we are induced to share a common ideal is none other than that indicated by Freud—the creation of an empathic relationship with our fellows by means of imitation of the same patterns—by meeting, as it were, in the common form or quality of the universally valid work of art."

Some degree of empathy is universal in respect of those who are "close" to us: it is from the others that we shut ourselves thoughtlessly and insensitively away, imagination having failed.

The influence of Rousseau's *Emile*, of such men as Robert Owen, Froebel and Dewey, of the work of kindred societies such as the New Education Fellowship or the Society for Education through Art, have helped to realise Nursery, Infant and Junior schools where children gain a spontaneity and zest for life. The importance of play and creative activities, exemplified in pioneer progressive schools, is more and more accepted in the state system. Even the 1944 Act spoke of providing education appropriate for each child according to his "age, aptitude and ability".

The feature of progressive schools that the state is nowhere near accepting is the doing away with punishment. If this can be done in a community of the most anti-social and unruly delinquents, as demonstrated by Homer Lane<sup>1</sup> or Makarenko<sup>2</sup> and their followers, it certainly can be done in a school of normally law-abiding pupils. The absence of punishment, whether corporal or otherwise, demands some other basis of discipline. In a word this means responsibility for school affairs, in and out of the classroom, shared between staff and children. There is a variety of degrees, and areas, over which this can be exercised ranging in example from A. S. Neil's Summerhill, Rendcomb as described in J. H. Simpson's *Sane Schooling*, Kees Boeke's werkplaats at Bilthoven<sup>3</sup>, or King Alfred, the day school in north London. A school meeting, conducted by the chosen representatives of staff and pupils, rather than prefects, and given real responsibility, will provide a type of training in managing people and understanding their motives which an authoritarian régime precludes.

The essential reason for the state's reluctance to adopt such forms of persuasive discipline is its basis of compulsory attendance. This bedevils most of the plans for a raised school leaving age as envisaged in the Crowther Report<sup>4</sup>, for instance. The Local Education Authority should provide the facilities, but the individual pupil, acting under

\*Read notes that in discussing the various types of poetry, Plato in the "Republic", uses imitation to mean not copying some natural object or other, but the process by which the poet or actor assimilates himself to the person whom he is portraying, and thereby extinguishes his own personality for the time being. This is empathy.

advice, should decide what courses he takes and at what age he leaves.

The struggle for play and active methods has been largely won at the Primary level. But the work of Alex Bloom, headmaster at St. George-in-the-East, Stepney, was the exception that proves the rule that the struggle for self-government in secondary schools, and Training Colleges for that matter, has yet to begin. This, it seems to me, is the point in national education at which a philosophy of non-violence should be made to impinge.

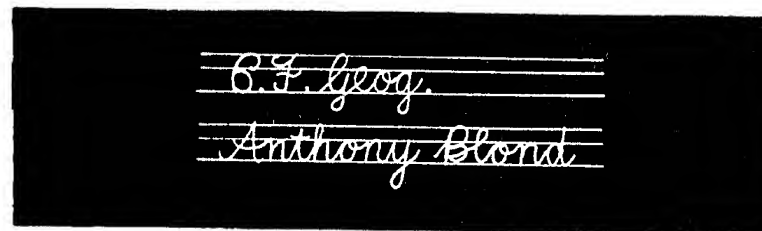
Don't let any reader jump to the conclusion that self-government and creative activities in schools on the widest scale will act as a kind of open sesame to a new way of life. But so far as education is concerned these will be the most helpful ingredients. Together they could represent a shift in human relationships which if combined with similar advances in co-operative practices in industry and commerce, would amount to a revolutionary change.

We know enough of the springs of human behaviour to be able to say that "a world without war" is a feasible cultural aim for the immediate future. We know that it is in the intimate group of the family that the authoritarian or "democratic" character is laid. A persuasive discipline and new methods of teaching can be consciously adopted so that the children grow up not so lacking in self-assertion as to acquiesce in support of a national war, nor needing aggressive outlets in ghoulish deeds in battle.

We know from the now hackneyed study of the Mountain Arapesh tribe<sup>5</sup> that the social group to which a child belongs determines to a large extent his future behaviour and character, and that this particular culture produced a co-operative and peaceful people in contrast to the unco-operative unkind and extremely aggressive Mundugumor tribe.

It is sometimes objected that to try to cultivate non-violent behaviour in children is to submit them to unwarrantable moral pressure. Yet people who make this objection at the same time condemn stealing, for example, or the comparatively recently controversial practice of slavery, without recognising the inconsistency. And the essence of a non-violent philosophy excludes compulsion. A parent or teacher cannot avoid making a choice in determining the type of environment and opportunities he presents to children and upon which the possibilities of their development depend. One of the functions of a teacher should be to organise *things* that will lead to worthwhile activities. Not to organise is not to make children free but to make them impoverished; they should be at liberty—to accept or not to accept grown-up suggestions. This applies as much to gardening, book learning, to what they shall wear, as to practice in living in a non-violent society.

1. **Homer Lane and the Little Commonwealth**, E. T. Bazeley. Allen & Unwin, 1948.
2. **The Road to Life**, A. S. Makarenko. Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1951.
3. **The Werkplaats Adventure**, Wyatt Rawson. London, 1956.
4. **15-18**. Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education—England. H.M.S.O., 1959.
5. **Male & Female**, a study of the sexes in a changing world, Margaret Mead. Gollancz, 1950. See pages 416-421.



"YOU'RE SURE YOU WOULDN'T LIKE ME TO STAY at the back of the class?" asked their form master. 6F had a reputation. The classification meant that the children were near the end of their Secondary Modern careers which had been spent in the lower academic streams. Of course no degree of paper analysis could indicate the spirit of the form until encountered in the flesh. 6F might be somnolent or rowdy, quick witted or dumb, goaty or sheepy.

There was nothing stolid about the *geist* of 6F as personified by Jackson, Peter and Mason, Chris. Like all efficient partnerships from Seylla and Charybdis to the Messina brothers, each complemented the other. Jackson, Peter was the wit, a small, fair boy and blazerless, expert in the loaded question and in repartee. While he interrupted verbally, Mason continued with the routine demolition work of eating the window cord, overturning chairs and kicking ankles. This was a big boned lumbering dark lad with eyes of dried insolence, dull and hard like the currants in a rock cake. There was nothing malicious about the boy, as time was to show; if he kicked an ankle it was simply the nearest to him. Any distraction was better than school, which was a legal device to prevent his earning.

The two boys sat together as partners should, and my first action was to separate them. This might have been tactically sound but it was a wrong move strategically and psychologically. In breaking up a known local disturbance I became vulnerable to fire from each side of the classroom and by singling them out I had recognised, and in a funny way, approved, their status.

The first two minutes of the lesson marked 'Geog' in the time table were calm. Thirty pairs of eyes looked up at me with mild curiosity. I had not yet bored them—and the other two pairs of eyes watched for a false move.

'Greece,' I had begun, 'is a small country divided into little farms of about 2½ acres each. Not very much if you think of England where 50 acres is about average. They grow raisins, tobacco, wine . . .'

'Sir, sir, sir, sir.'

*ANTHONY BLOND is a publisher who is starting a series of text-books for the lower streams of secondary modern schools. His account of his attempt to teach in one is not meant to be taken frivolously.*

I looked at the clock. Thirty-six minutes to go.

'Sir, sir, sir.'

It was Jackson, Peter.

'Sir, 'ave you ever bin drunk?'

(Wham!)

The observed rule at the school was that a questioning boy or girl should extend his or her right arm and wait until nominated by the teacher to utter. More usually the teacher would ask a question of the class—preferably an easy one to secure maximum audience participation—and then select one of the less academically endowed children (euphemisms only *please*) to answer it. The correct course would have been to have reminded Peter Jackson of the rule, which he knew perfectly well, and which he-should-not-think I-did-not-know-he-knew. But I didn't. I answered the question. And what a clever one! To have answered 'no' would have been untrue and priggish. 'Yes' would provoke a gale of matey laughter, and speculation on the relative merits of beer and whiskey.

I said 'Yes'.

Applause. I was on the run.

At what moment Mason, Chris lobbed a heavy object across the room to Jackson, Peter, whose cronies congratulated him on so neat a catch, does not matter. It was one of a series of breaches of the peace for which I threatened Mason, and when I did so his little black eyes shone for a moment, with triumph.

(Incidentally, a wise and not particularly old headmaster of a Secondary Modern School in the West Country once told me: 'If you *have* to hit a child, do it like this.' And he gave me a tremendous clout on the back. 'You see, it gives you quite a shock, doesn't it? It makes a loud noise and leaves no mark'.)

I was not alone in regarding Mason as a menace, for at one moment, one of three girls in the front row, a nymphet Madonna of infinite compassions, who seemed quite moved by Thermopylae, turned round savagely and said, 'For —'s sake let 'im 'ave a chance.'

Later, I was talking about the main export of Greece being Greeks. Surely they had heard of Onassis? Suddenly there was a yelp of pain from the pupil immediately to the front of Mason, Chris who had stuck a pencil too deep into the nape of his/her neck. Oh ye progressive educationalists, weep for the frightened temporary teacher who lost his temper and banged that boy on the back till his right arm ached.

Break-down. I had struck a child—albeit one weighing nine stone and standing six feet high in his stockings. There would be repercussions, starting with looks in the staff-room, a quiet word from the Deputy Head, a parent perhaps with fists of concrete and justice on his side, and, heaven knows, the Press . . . During the minute which followed that unforgivable outburst there was a calm during which several sentences were finished intact, and were it not for the keen generalship of Peter Jackson, chaos might have yielded to order and the partnership would have lost the day.

'Sir', he said, in a voice mild with meekness.

'Sir', he said again.

'Yes?'

'Sir' said Peter Jackson, pausing as if his words had to be carefully chosen, 'Sir, may I be excused?'

Jackson's need was clearly psycho- not physiological. Surrender would have rid me of a turbulence but might have been the signal for a mass exodus on identical grounds. So ran my panicky thoughts.

'No, you can pee in your pants.'

This gained a cheap laugh.

The class was restless. The matador growing bored of his bull. We all wished the ordeal would end. Eventually it did. The custom was that when the bell rang, the class, at a signal from the teacher, should stand and file out of the room, row by row. The bell rang, and 6F stampeded out to break. Except for the Madonna who stood there with a shopping basket and was holding out a sixpence.

'Thank you very much all the same sir, but I can't take this.'

And with a smile she handed back my sixpence. I had forgotten that, distraught for distractions, I had offered a prize for a correct answer to: 'Which is further West, Athens or Alexandria?' So, loss of control, loss of temper, and now bribery!

A temporary colleague from the next door class room came in and offered me a cigarette. 'How d'you get on with 6F?'

'Well . . .'

'Whatever you were doing they were making a dreadful row.'

'I was talking to them . . . trying to talk to them . . . about Greece.'

'You talked to 6F?'

'I tried . . . doesn't anybody . . . also I hit one of them . . . hard.'

'Which one?'

'A big boney dark one with little black eyes.'

'Ah, Mason. Mason and Jackson. You should have sent them away to the gym.'

'What for?'

'To blow up footballs.'

\* \* \* \*

The news of my thumping Chris Mason cannot have taken more than two minutes to communicate to 400 children and thirty-two teachers, for when the two of us entered the staff room for a cup of tea I was greeted warmly, really for the first time, as if I had been bloodied, and was now one of them. To have attacked any of the little angels in 2D, or the solid citizens of 4E would have been eccentric and unnecessary. But 6F had a reputation. . . .

That afternoon 6F were due for another Geography lesson from their regular teacher, and I sat in the back row while, in almost discreet silence, pieces of paper were handed out, then pencils, then instructions that each was to put his or her name on the right hand side of the sheet of paper, the date on the left hand side, and their form in the

middle—6F. This took five minutes: I was beginning to see the point.

Then 6F settled down for ten minutes to record what they had learnt about Greece. Although this little test had been my idea I sat nervously wondering what any of them could possibly have learnt.

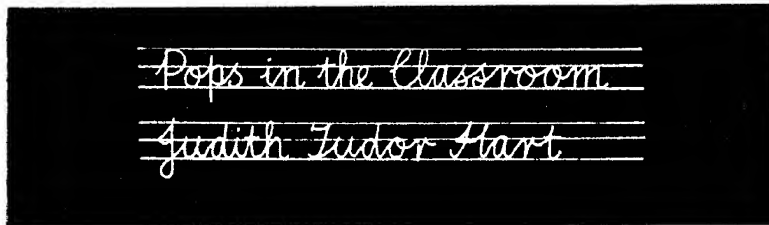
Chris Mason was not sitting in his usual place by the window, near the sash cord, next to Peter Jackson. Instead he was right at the back of the room in the same row as me, so that when he turned sideways, caught my eye, and beckoned to me silently with his forefinger, I was able to tiptoe to his side without anybody noticing.

'How d'you spell Onassis?'

With his huge gormless paw he had constructed something which looked like Enos. I corrected this with my pen and to show I knew he had forgiven me, made Athens and not Alexandria the capital of Greece.

Three days later I asked the master charged with educating 6F what their answers had been like. 'Oh, quite good. They learnt something.'

I had learnt more.



SELDOM IS ONE UNACQUAINTED with the tune currently heading the Top Twenty. The vast profits of the popular music industry depend on publicity alone; the jingle, after all, is selling nothing but itself. The public eye is thus drawn to it more than to other commercial businesses which exploit with similar lack of regard for the public good and for the quality of their products. Even amongst the children themselves there is a sense of incompatibility. Stated one boy in a class interviewed on the subject: 'I've 'eard as Adam Faith earns ten times as much as the Prime Minister; well, I mean, 'e don't do 'alf as much for the country!' Some parents of course join in with their childrens' enthusiasm for pop music, in this particular school, a mixed Secondary Modern, their parents bought most of the records. But amongst higher income groups, Tin Pan Alley is condemned as one of the nastier products of society where the ethics of other commercial rackets are ignored. It crystallises the conflict between parents and adolescents in many families.

Only too often the Philistinism of the racketeers is transferred in the public mind to the children they exploit. This, I am sure, is a mistake. Once we had established that the songs themselves were under discussion and not the children who listened to them, the boys and girls I talked to were astoundingly critical. They readily admitted that the singers were vastly overpaid, that they rarely hit the right note, that the songs were too Americanised and the words often ridiculous. These criticisms, I may add, came from the children themselves and were not suggested to them.

'Some backing groups have to play extra loud to drown the singer!' claimed one boy. Despite their outward contempt for many of the song lyrics, it was obvious that the image presented by them was commonly accepted; loneliness, refuted and unreturned love, misunderstood youth are easy themes for adolescents to swallow. Far better though that emotional conflict of this period be extroverted and admitted to, even if it must be reduced to such a low common denominator. It was notable how much the children enjoyed talking about pop music; they needed little prompting and some children raised their hands to talk again and again, several of whom, I was told, were notorious for their lack of co-operation in lessons. It was evident that the identity presented to them by pop records largely formed a basis for communication with one another; it allowed them to be independent of school and parents. Whether this is a good thing or not is debatable, but response from such children is best obtained from acceptance of it.

Apart from providing an outlet for superfluous emotional energy, the fleeting popularity of the current hit is not so far removed from a genuine social heritage. To trace popular music to its root is to delve into the very origins of culture. The transition from the spontaneous and unselfconscious to the premeditated and highly self-conscious has in no way altered the similarity of the response. This transition, furthermore, reached its final stages earlier than most people suppose; the tunes of medieval ballads were unoriginal and their themes and phraseology repetitive although they had but one creator. John Earle in his *Micocosmagraphia* of 1628 writes of the 'Pot Poet' whose ballad sheets were to replace the minstrel: "... his frequentest works go out in single sheets and are chanted from market to market to a vile tune and a worse throat whilst the poor country wench melts like butter to hear them."

The popular song has survived together with its obvious intellectual defects, inviting the same criticism and fulfilling the same basic requirements. Its simplicity evokes the desire to dance, to sing, to play oneself; several of the boys in the school I visited played instruments

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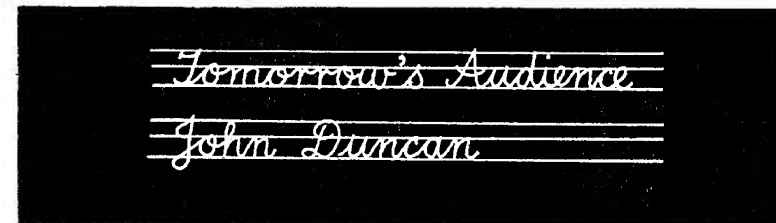


in a group and made up many of their own songs; although their knowledge of their instruments was mostly self-taught, they admired the few among them who could read music and decipher song sheets—it made their renderings sound “more professional”. I played them one or two records of more ambitious pop songs and they fully appreciated the slight element of counterpoint and harmony to be observed. The progression towards appreciation of more complex music would not appear to be very obscure. Yet as soon as the words “Classical Music” were mentioned the children chorused “Ugh!!” in delighted derision. They refused to connect such plagiarisms as “Nut Rocker” with a more cultured origin. After more questioning it became apparent that, despite a number of music lessons per week, their idea of “Classical Music” was confined to the warbling of large-bosomed ladies. An introduction to serious, highly orchestrated music would take a very long time, despite their familiarity with the basic requirements, merely because of their intense prejudice.

I think more accounts for this than defence of the teenage ego. In making their appeal to adolescents largely dependent on stirring up the “battle” between youth and age and romanticising misunderstood youth, the racketeers are obviously doing little to encourage young listeners to participate in the musical enjoyment of their elders. Yet a study of the children themselves reveals a good humour and honesty which contrast very favourably with the mild yet exasperating hypocrisy of many of their critics; surely it is fair to suggest that a large proportion of the enthusiasm apparently created by modern “serious” music is dishonest, and that the mind which derives its greatest musical inspiration from “The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy” on Family Favourites is no less insensitive than the fan of “Nut Rocker”. The change from the primitive to the civilized long ago created a division in culture; the refinement of man’s sensibility in the higher stratum of society inevitably brought about a rarification of the arts and consequently an aristocracy in music. In the hearts of a class rising in the social scale there is a dread of any aspect of culture associated primarily with the working class, and the resulting snobbery has been sufficient to convince many young potential music lovers that there are two vastly differing worlds of music: that of warbling, bosomy ladies and that of young, energetic teenagers. In reality these worlds are both created and separated by false social criteria; a good tune is a good tune whoever writes it, and many professed lovers of music rarely progress beyond acknowledgment of the tune alone—witness the number of attendants at symphony concerts who are bored and bewildered until the theme tune shows itself again.

In France, from my observation at any rate, the schism is not so broad and a devotee of one kind of music does not listen to it exclusively. There is such a thing as an intellectual pop singer; Jacques Brel, Georges Brassens and Yves Montand have enhanced the universally acceptable tune with pleasant, unaffected voices and witty—sometimes wise—lyrics. Jacques Brel particularly has no equal in England;

he writes both the words and the music of his songs and comments as poignantly on the futility of war as on the tenderness of love. There are singers in England who attempt the revival of a more meaningful popular song, but too often the remnants of an outdated folk ‘tradition’—which, in reality, has passed to other things—linger to result in a drab devitalised effect. There is no reason why the sophisticated pop song should not be a commercial success; at the moment, the racketeers underestimate both the intelligence and the extent of their market as much as do their critics. It spreads potentially into all classes and all age groups; in the course of a discussion on the subject, over half the members of an Oxford College essay society admitted to listening regularly to Radio Luxembourg and it is rumoured that the Dean of the same college is endeavouring to cash in on the pop market himself.



WE DECIDED THAT OUR FIRST BATTLEFIELD would be the schools, particularly the secondary schools, and we did a bit of research on who else was operating there. There were some good companies, like Brian Ways, and Caryl Fenner's, but they dealt mainly with younger children than we were going to aim for, and, to a large extent, seemed to regard theatre as a form of character therapy, which we didn't. Frankly, we like jobs, and we certainly don't want to try and turn them all into theatrically-minded cissies. We do believe though that they miss a lot of enjoyable and basically interesting contacts with other minds by their natural unwillingness to enter the set-up that has been created to surround matters of art. However, that's not their problem. It's our problem. That's how we looked at it. We had to find a new set-up.

One of the barriers to enjoying the classical authors particularly, is that they go on for too long for an uneducated mind to concentrate on them properly. This is undeniable. I, with my Oxford B.A., recently saw a performance of 'The Dream' which had no interval, and that was certainly too much for me. What am I entitled to expect from C streams in rural secondary schools then?

We decided to present an anthology. We chose as our theme

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JOHN DUNCAN and Richard Ingrams started the drama company 'Tomorrow's Audience' in August 1961. His article is shortened from his account of it in Axle Quarterly, by courtesy of the editors.

'Prison', mainly because it is a prolific source of writing, both as a setting, a subject, and—in the past—it was almost a condition of authorship. Imprisonment and capital punishment are both contemporary topics, too. We are working on a new anthology in 'The Ranker at War' now.

In doing the work we are doing, there are two essentials. One is a good understanding and liking for what your yobbies understand and like. Like Elvis, and Cliff, and Bobby Vee, for instance. If you want to set up an atmosphere of enjoyment, then for God's sake, give them what they enjoy. Don't mess about with phoney ballads and songs of work; they're things of the past. The other is not to be snotty about what you call culture. If a thing's worth doing its worth doing straight, and it will be able to stand up straight beside any kind of neighbour. 'The Prisoners' started off with Elvis singing 'Jailhouse Rock'. Frequently the kids were clapping in time to the music as the curtain went up. Almost invariably, the teachers became apprehensive—*apprehensive* of the kinds' enjoyment! Three minutes later they are sitting quietly watching a staging of 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' and 'The Quare Fellow'. Ten minutes later, they got five minutes of dramatised Plato.

We'd obviously gone a fair way to finding our formula. The kids enjoyed it everywhere we went, and so did the teachers when they saw what was happening. But, although they enjoyed it, we felt a slight disbelief in the value of our work when we saw a great slab of youth just sitting and watching. It was a great thing for school hours—it was time off lessons anyway—and it was all laid on, but I couldn't honestly visualise them making any personal and actual effort to repeat the experience, without it being laid on in a similar way. Kids shouldn't sit about for ninety minutes and truly enjoy it. They should want something more if they're real kids.

However the reports from teachers were so glowing—regarding the help we were giving them in proving to the kids that lit. and hist. might not be square—that we continued, for the time being with 'The Prisoners'. All through the winter and spring though, new ideas were beginning to form. We were naturally pleased with the success of our first show—it played at the Criterion Theatre, London, and the Royal Court before February was out—but we couldn't help feeling increasingly irritated with the continuous spectacle of kids, whom we'd just seen laughing and playing in yards and corridors, suddenly herding themselves together for an hour of 'let's pretend'.

But we couldn't yet think of a way to jolly them up without either wrecking the structure of the show, or of abandoning one of our first principles which is that we like culture. And there was always the problem of the apprehensive schoolmaster. We have got a way now, we think, but it took all our funds, and two more experiments to find it. For the meanwhile—just watch out for a new word, a word I think will be part of the common tongue within a year, even if it's not pretty to look at: 'Showloque'.

## *A charter for the unfree child*

*Martin Daniel*

AMONG PHILOSOPHERS IT IS A COMMONPLACE that words get in the way of accurate thought. Take for instance the verb "to teach". It generally appears in a sentence preceded by a subject (the teacher) and followed by an indirect and a direct object (the pupil and the information taught). This syntax seems to imply that a particular piece of information is fed by an active teacher into a passive student.

Now you will already be aware that this is misleading; that in fact this picture of "teaching" is merely a picture of its superficial appearance—it is what the situation looks like, say, to a photographer or a naturalistic painter. In reality, teaching in this sense simply does not occur at all; the child is not a receptacle; teaching presupposes learning; and we learn in a proportion that must be something like direct to our interest, intelligence and memory.

So far this reads, I have no doubt, like a series of truisms such as you might expect to hear in any post-graduate lecture on the philosophy of education. But the point is that, however obvious all this seems to you and me, there are many (they may even be the majority) who do look on teaching as a simple business of filling a receptacle, and that surprisingly enough most of the rest of us (who imagine we think more clearly than that) fall sometimes into this same mistake.

Most of the rest of us, I said. For what would follow if the photographic view of education were correct? The state of the pupils' receptivity and their emotional attitude to learning would be of no account; all that would matter would be that the information fed into them should be useful or civilizing or both. Education, regardless of teacher or pupil, would be in itself good. Now is not this exactly what we most of us automatically assume? It is in fact one of the basic tenets of our culture. Since education is good, more of it must be better. And being good, it is a right, which must be granted to those who ask for it. It is not surprising that the parents and educational authorities are continually seeking its extension to older and still

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older pupils. Three years ago the Crowther Report recommended the raising of the school leaving age from 15 to 16, as provided for in the Education Act of 1944. It hasn't happened yet, but it will.

Teachers, of course, have a more practical attitude. The basic philosophy of education as held by most of them is that "if you keep throwing mud at a wall, in the end some of its sticks." In other words, pupils are indeed just like receptacles, though with this proviso: that they are sieve-like receptacles, so that most of the information they are told sinks rapidly out of reach, and what remains tends to be irrelevant.

Nonetheless, the underlying assumption is the same. And to it is added one even less rational: that it is morally improving to learn, even to learn something intrinsically useless. The mind, it is held, is like a lead pencil; it can be sharpened on any old knife. With educational psychologists this is an unpopular view nowadays. But it is still not uncommon among teachers and parents, and is often advanced in conversation as a defence of apparently purposeless pieces of teaching. One hears it particularly often in this form: "They've got to do a lot of disagreeable things when they grow up; and the sooner they learn this, the better." Of course, one's memory is invaluable; and it can be improved by exercise. But it is surprising how reluctant people are to admit that to exercise memory by learning something useful rather than something useless is a double good. And has anyone ever investigated the long-term effects of learning information which the learner resists? It is quite possible that it may actually be harmful, and where there is such a possibility it is vital to discover the truth of the matter.

Education, then, is felt with all the fanatical conviction of a superstition to be good in itself. "Good educational facilities," said the Crowther Report, "once provided, are not left unused." It did not cross the minds of its writers to ask how much knowledge it retained, whether it is put to any use, and whether its use brings profit in people's work or leisure. To the writers of the Report such questions are, I suppose, absurd; there is only one conceivable answer to them. For otherwise, the very foundations of our educational system would be called in question.

The Report did not of course state this superstition in so many words. Indeed, it put forward a long and reasonably argued case in favour of raising the school-leaving age. There is at present, it said, a waste of talent, which our increasingly complex society, requiring more and more skilled and fewer and fewer unskilled workers, cannot afford. The only way to ensure that the waste is stopped is by a compulsory increase of education. The part-time system, even with day-release, is not an efficient substitute for full-time education. The number of Secondary Modern pupils staying voluntarily after the age of 15 is increasing, but may be dependent on economic conditions, which may well alter. The demand for more educated and more deeply educated workers is growing. And there is a general need for secondary education to extend throughout the "difficult and important period

of adolescence." All this is eminently reasonable, provided one assumes one thing: that the waste of talent can be remedied by one more year of compulsory education. That it is in fact an increase in the quantity and not in the quality of education that is wanted.

Why should one think that an increase in the quantity of education will *not* benefit our children? Well, let us be quite clear about the teaching situation in the average school. There is no question of having 30 ardent and inquisitive children whose only conscious wish is to acquire learning and nobility at all costs. In fact most children simply do not want to learn. They have far more interesting things to do and think about. Whatever one's views on A. S. Neill's experiments in education, he has certainly demonstrated that children, given absolute freedom to learn or not to learn, will play away much of their time, at least between 12 and 15. The fact that ours is a compulsory system of education is clear evidence for this. And let us be quite clear about it; compulsion implies the use of force.

Of course, sometimes children are interested, even for quite long periods, in what is being taught them. If they are Grammar School pupils they are assumed to have the intelligence without which interest in the more academic subjects is difficult or impossible. But even in a Grammar School it is practically never 35 out of 35 who are interested; and you can't interest even some of the children all of the time. The fact that they are not interested is often disguised even from them by good teaching technique. Even when this fails, respect for their teacher may keep them at least apparently attentive.

Respect seems almost a meaningless word after being used in so many different emotional contexts. Respect for a teacher, however, is normally of the sort we term "a healthy respect", that is to say the respect of the mouse for the cat. The less intelligent the children are, the more likely they are to be consciously hostile to learning; and then the teacher (told "You must teach") can only tell his class "You must learn", and use compulsion.

We have then the classic teaching situation: about 40 children who are not interested in the subject they are supposed to be learning, who do not see the point of it, and who are in their own eyes just filling in time until they get to 15 and can leave school to earn some money; who none the less write and listen, and produce neat and legible exercise books suitable for the impressing of inspectors, parents and prospective employers; who are capable of reading most things that are not actually informative, even though they do not often trouble to do so; and who are held in an apparent state of docility and keenness by a mixture of suggestion, persuasion, blackmail, vague threats of the anger of their teachers and parents, and crystal clear threats of imminent punishment.

While subjects remain as divorced from the taste and understanding of Secondary Modern pupils as they usually are at present, nothing can be done about this. On page 33 of the Crowther Report it is suggested that girls in their final years at school should be treated not as children but as young adults. This is excellent. But it is not

suggested how teachers can achieve this better than they are doing already. When adults come to learn, they come willingly and there is no hostility in the classroom atmosphere. But the very facts of compulsion and a resented curriculum keep pupils in the same old childish situation even when they are 16 or 17.

We still of course define education in the traditional way as the learning of good English, mathematics, the basic stages of a foreign language, and facts about geography, history and so on, without which (obviously) nothing whatever can be said about these subjects, as well as the more obviously pleasurable subjects of art, handicrafts, sport and the rest. The difficulty is that, on the whole, the less intelligent a child is, the less capable he is of doing well enough even to satisfy himself in any of these subjects. Intelligence is in fact a reasonably good measure of a child's capacity to profit from education. It is often said that subjects can be taught by less academic methods, as if an unintelligent child could grasp things as well as an intelligent one if only a different approach was used. The suggestion is manifest nonsense. The old academic ways of teaching are used because they communicate the most information in the shortest time. Any other method will either communicate less information or serve a different purpose. It is therefore easy to understand why teachers are reluctant to discard the old methods. To do so would mean discarding education itself, as they understand it. So situations are reached like that in a Secondary Modern School form of which I was told; where the same English syllabus was followed in four successive years, and the children knew less of it at the end of each year than they had at the end of the preceding one. "Dreadful!" you will cry; "a shocking waste of time!" And you will be right. "They should have been given a less academic approach." Right again. "Then they would have learned more." Probably right again, but not for the obvious reason. For if a different method achieves better results even according to the orthodox way of measuring results, that is a by-product due to more interest and co-operation having been aroused in the children. In general a different purpose will have been served.

A change in the object of education, however, was not the Report's intention. Its authors state that one of their reasons for wanting the leaving age raised is that better qualified and more deeply educated workers are required these days. At least a part therefore of the additional time will be spent giving more of the present sort of teaching. This indeed is implied elsewhere, when the Report approves (p. 113) of teaching more foreign languages, which are extremely academic.

I question, by the way, the assumption behind this proposal. Those who show signs of increasing their intellectual attainment should of course stay on at school after 15; and they often do already. But it is a fallacy to think that it necessarily can be increased by stopping at school, or that an increase would necessarily be great enough to be worthwhile. In any case, does the employers' demand for more qualifications mean that they want more training or more intelligence? If training, one would expect this to be done best by the employers

themselves. If intelligence, this cannot be raised, at least by present methods of education.

Of course, the Report did state (p. 94) that girls and boys in the lower streams of the Secondary Modern should be taught by methods which "are much less formal and much more closely related to exploration than exposition . . . Pupils will nearly always prefer 'I see' to 'I understand'." This does not sound like the change in the object of education that I was looking for, if only because this sort of thing has been said so often before and has clearly been insufficient to alter the situation.

Something more concrete is suggested for the final year only—that is, for the fifteen-year-olds who will be staying on at school instead of going out to work. They should be given courses in citizenship, ethics, politics, philosophy and religion. "The additional year should offer new and challenging courses and not be simply a continuation of what has gone before. These should be so devised that they satisfy the adolescent's intensified interest in the real world and recognize his rapidly growing need for independence." And the Report pointed anxiously to the rising tide of delinquency and the disappearance of the old morality.

Yet the Report itself showed that delinquency is higher among 13-year-olds than among 15-year-olds who have just left school, and highest of all among 14-year-olds (who are in their last year at school). Moreover, before the school-leaving age was last raised to 15 (in 1947), the 13-year-olds (then in *their* last year at school) were the most delinquent. Nor did the rate among them drop after the raising of the age (except briefly between 1953 and 1957). If one really wanted to reduce delinquency, it would seem more logical to reduce the school-leaving age than to raise it.

The Report had no explanation to give. It merely suggested that the greater amount of spare time possessed by school-children gives them more opportunity to be delinquent. This does not explain why the 14-year-olds should be more anti-social than the 13-year-olds, nor what produces the inclination. It is possible to conclude that the fact of being in one's last year at school, treated as a child but longing to be an adult, is frustrating enough to dispose adolescents to delinquency, and that the raising of the leaving age was at least one of the causes for the increase in it which is still continuing. It is ridiculous to discount this suggestion simply because it contradicts what we should like to believe.

In spite of this, the Report's ambitious courses in citizenship and the rest might be thought likely to have some effect. But schools have always tried to give some moral instruction. Where they have supported the outlook of adult society, or that section of it to which the children belonged, they have been often reasonably successful; but where they have opposed things that are normally approved by society, such as smoking or swearing, they have at most driven them underground. I have never heard anyone suggest that he has given up smoking because his schoolmaster persuaded him it was wrong. This



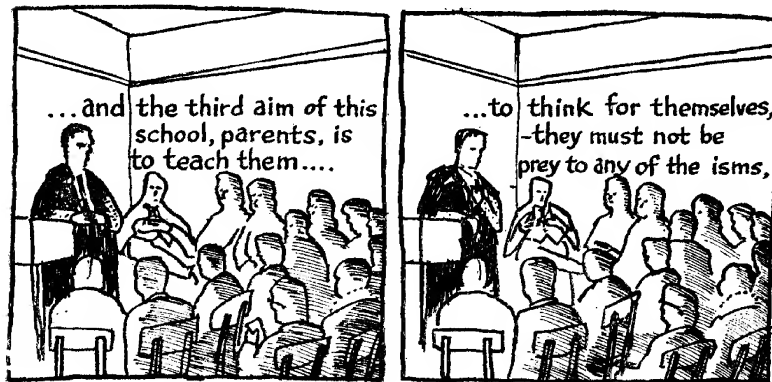
suggests that the methods of indoctrination used by schools have no effect. So, when the Report asks if it is too much to hope that keeping teenagers at school another year might conceivably enable their teachers to give them, for example in the field of sex, a "well-understood knowledge of what is right and what is wrong", we can reply quite firmly: Yes, it is too much to hope.\*

Another hope is that the schools may counter the influence of the mass media by giving an inkling of culture. If this is to be done in the old way and by the old methods, its effectiveness will again be negligible. It is one of the commonest results of our present educational system that children are repelled from culture and all that smacks of the highbrow. This is not so much the teachers' fault as the fault of the situation, which implies that most of what the children like is worthless, whereas what the teacher likes is superior. In the necessarily rigid atmosphere of the classroom, culture tends to appear rather drearily solemn.

Perhaps an inspired teacher may be able to do better than this, given time and freedom. Any cultural influence, in fact, depends on the man who gives it. Do we have such men? Some, no doubt. But do we have enough, and if we raise the leaving age shall we get more of them? The report itself admits that, as far as the less intelligent pupils are concerned, "whether they will be able to get the right teachers seems to us a doubtful matter," (p.94) and, little though it wishes to, goes on to imply that the teaching situation in Secondary Moderns is often bad.

I am not arguing against the possibility of an improvement in the quality of Secondary Modern education. I am only arguing against the likelihood of it under the old system and using the old methods. And

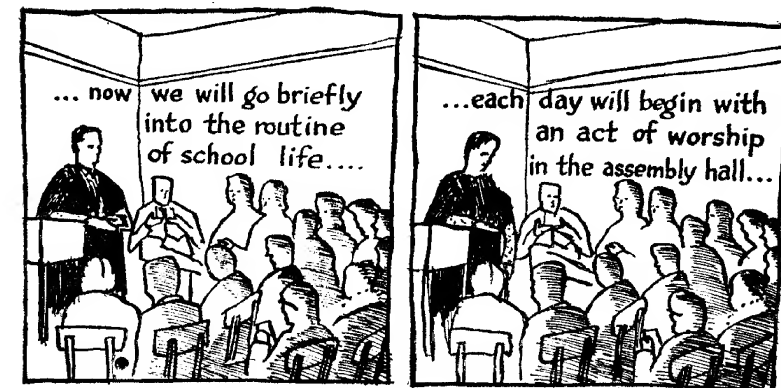
\*In any case the subject is a dangerous one. Honest discussion of it, although the only effective method, is likely to reveal that right and wrong are matters of opinion.



the Report holds out no hope of altering these. It is an old tradition in our education that the teachers determine how and what they teach. Legally there is no compulsory subject except Religious Instruction (which is, one would think, the most controversial subject of the lot!). There have been experiments of a mild sort in method and syllabus, particularly in some of the progressive Secondary Moderns, but the majority of the profession have preferred to go on teaching the old things in the old way, though sometimes compromising to the extent of calling them by new names. It is therefore safe to prophesy that the only practical measure which will come out of the Crowther Report, so far as the Modern School is concerned, will be the raising of the leaving age. Curricula and methods will be left (after perhaps a period of exhortation) to develop or fail to develop just as the teachers please.

What remedy is there, then? The favourite reproach levelled by conservatives at reformers is that their criticism is entirely destructive. There is something in this; reformers generally do spend more of their time abolishing than building, but this is because in social organisms it is more difficult to destroy than to create; and destruction automatically results in a new stability. However, conservatives are understandably fond of this reproach, since if they recognised constructive criticism when it was made, they would be obliged to answer it. I therefore want to point out that what follows is mostly intended to be constructive.

In the first place, a considerable amount of research needs to be undertaken into the purpose of education and the mechanisms of learning, things which are generally assumed to be well understood, but about which we really know very little. We ought to know how much information people retain after leaving school, and how much they use. Not only present methods need to be investigated, but also possible alternatives. The most difficult thing, of course, will be to apply the knowledge thus gained. The relevance of any research could not be gauged until actual conditions of teaching as at present conducted



are admitted openly. Here in fact is the great difficulty. As an extreme example, imagine the reception of a researcher bent on investigating the actual amount of physical punishment meted out in a sample of Secondary Moderns; imagine what the heads would say when asked how many times punishment was administered and not entered in the punishment book. Heads and teachers are secretive about such details. And, according to their lights, they are even right to be so, as otherwise they might find teaching impossibly difficult. It is also a comfort, amounting sometimes almost to a psychological necessity, since they generally succeed in persuading themselves that all is for the best in the best of all possible schools.

The findings of our research might support the following programme. Under present systems of teaching, much is not learnt, and most of what is learnt is forgotten; also great resistance is set up to cultural and intellectual values. Of course, the Secondary Modern pupil lacks intelligence for this kind of study. One cannot hope to turn his brain into a storehouse of knowledge; the best one can hope to do is acquaint him with certain essential facts, such as a modicum of English and arithmetic (less than is attempted now), to give him plenty of practical work, which he would not necessarily excel at, but whose usefulness he could understand, plenty of games, which he would enjoy for their own sakes, and for the rest to entertain him with good plays and good literature (which we believe, surely, are good because more enjoyable and more real, not because possessed of some mystical quality called "greatness"), and to discuss the world of reality, current affairs, the equality of sexes and races, and so forth. Our pupils will not be able to remember most of what they are told; one should not expect it. But perhaps we shall succeed in putting their hearts nearer the right place than they are at present. When a girl of 17, kind, charming, well-educated, can tell me without a trace of shame that the proximity of a negro makes her shudder, it is clear that her education has failed.

It sounds almost as if I too favour moral indoctrination. But one further step ought to be taken. Education can never hope to become efficient in the sense of gaining the optimum results from the smallest effort, until it is also voluntary. To withdraw compulsion is the only way to ensure that those who come are interested, and not hostile to their teaching. Of course, no browbeating would then be possible and no indoctrination. Discussions would have to be frank and sincere, or the students would not turn up. From the official point of view this is perhaps the gravest objection. Exams would be impossible. The only yardstick would be, I'm afraid, the unacademic one of children's interest and enjoyment regardless of apparent usefulness. The methods by which teaching would be done would resemble entertainment rather than education. But I myself learned more by reading Harter and Maraini than by two or three hundred lessons on geography. And truth can be as genuine in a play or a novel as in any documentary—and much more vivid.

I do not expect that any of these suggestions will be followed. Our culture is too deeply committed to the doctrine of the intrinsic goodness of education. Nor would most of the present generation of teachers be willing or indeed able to change their approach.\* I even wonder if it really matters. That our education system is hopelessly inefficient at least means that there is no effective indoctrination, no meddling with children's minds. The grammar schools will go on turning out adults who are adequately informed for most mundane purposes, and the readership of the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times* will go on gradually increasing. The relative illiteracy of the Secondary Modern class of society is positively satisfying to those who feel their own standards to be higher. The most valuable things in our culture—its music, its writing, its thinking, its jazz, its increasingly gentle way of life—owe nothing to the schools. Official education, in fact, matters less than people think. The fact that nobody is concerned enough to know what its purpose and technique should be, and that the only thing that alters its course is political expediency, implies that our rulers think so too.

\*Recently, after a most persuasive harangue of mine to a group of Science Sixth-Formers, in which I suggested they should read some good novels (and they were visibly impressed!), their mathematics teacher said to me: "I hear you've been telling the Sixth Form they ought to read more. I always say reading a novel is so much time wasted."

### WHAT I EXPECT FROM WORK

When I Leave school I would like to be a Bricklayer so that I can work out of doors it is a very interest Job and you can make lots of new friends I will probly be a tea boy to start of with then I will serve an apprentice for five years so that when I have served my appteship I can start up my own business and bild my own house I expect to be happy at my work I know two friends that all redy work at bricklayer I do not want to work in a fatry I Like mixing mortar.

—DAVID (14)

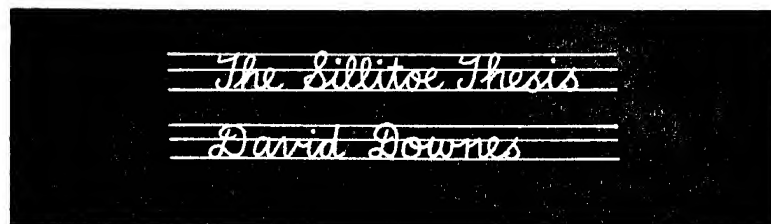
From work, school work that is, I expect a good job. A good job to me is when one can earn good money. I would not like a job as a dustman or stoker or any job where one works hard with their hands yet receives a poor wage-packet. Though, I would like a job where one receives twenty pounds or so and uses his head.

To me, the only solution to obtain this type of work is work while at school. If passes in the G.C.E. are obtained then you can expect a luxury life afterwards.

—PETER (14)

I am going into the butchering trade because it has a future in it. It is an old Trade and people will always want to eat meat.

—DAVID (14½)



**Case-history :** Smith, Colin. Aged 19. Socio-economic background: unskilled manual. Education: secondary modern. Residence: working-class slum in Nottingham. Occupation: nil. Home background: pre-fab accommodation, relatively hygienic. Family history: father recently deceased (cancer), mother works to support Colin and sibs (2 younger brothers, 1 younger sister). Family cohesion: weak. Mother involved in extra-marital relationship (fancy-man). Role-conflict between Mother and Colin re denomination of family unit (running the house). Psychiatric assesment tentative only due to subject's unwillingness to participate in interviews, etc., but possibly a borderline psychotic. But, from his reaction to institutionalisation, (culminating in an incident on Sports Day), Smith is clearly a thorough-going deviant, whose maladjustment to the parent society suggests a prognosis indicative of his future involvement in a criminal career, unless the appropriate remedial agencies can deter (cure) him.

**Remarks :** Mr. Sillitoe's thesis, in verbal form, had a cohesive structure and an abrupt style more appropriate to a literary career than to the human sciences. While his case history of a single delinquent career has a certain documentary value (his publisher made the curious claim that we learn more about working-class life from Mr. Sillitoe than from a dozen works of sociology), his work is marred by the subjective emphasis he lays on inequalities of the social system. The obvious flaw in his argument is shown by the fact that thousands of young lads in Smith's position lead thoroughly conformist lives, and overcome the handicaps of environment, family background, etc., by taking jobs such as builders' labourers, van-boys, semi-skilled factory operatives and the like. They may well indulge in 'fiddles', but this is an accepted form of economic manipulation throughout the social system, and lacks the singularly anti-social character of Smith's delin-

quency. Moreover, Mr. Sillitoe's impressionistic evidence can hardly qualify as 'data'. We recommend, therefore, that he pursues a career in fiction or journalism, and abandons his application for the post of Assistant Lecturer in Sociology at Nottingham University.

**SO TO THE FILM.** It was to be hoped that, with Sillitoe's classic story, Lassally's camera-work, and Tom Courtenay as the runner, Tony Richardson would turn in a classic film. He hasn't, but he has done a very competent job, easily his best so far. The trouble with Richardson is that he admires for the right reasons the very directors who are wrong for him. He is a self-indulgent director, who obviously leans heavily on Truffaut and the Italian neo-realists when he needs instead the austerity of Bresson. This is his fifth first feature film, and he has yet to develop a distinctive style instead of his present eclectic copying of New Wave originals. Having said this, having noted the facile lyricism and the grotesque fondness for overblown jazz, we should be grateful to Richardson for his integrity over subject-matter ('Sanctuary' being the exception to the rule). 'The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner' might have made a more powerful, bleak film, but there are hundreds of directors who would have botched in into a 'Carry On Borstal' or—even worse—a 'Boys in Brown'.

To succeed as a character study—and to bring off the final irony of the runner throwing the race—the film had to succeed in portraying the realities central to the Borstal system. The philosophy of Borstal—and of most of our prison system—is that custodial and remedial functions can be combined. The custodial framework—the deprivation of liberty, the enforcement of strict discipline, etc.—is expected to accommodate remedial influences—education, vocational training, a smattering of religion and 'interaction' with remedially-minded staff, group counselling, etc. Results are not so far justifying this uneasy amalgam of 'beating 'em' and 'treating 'em', but before we sneer too readily, it must be said (though I hate to admit it) that the Borstal system is in advance of most penal practice throughout the world, and it is difficult for a few enlightened academics and civil servants to effect a change when most of the population—of all classes—still think of crime and punishment in Stone Age terms. The best parts of the film are concerned with a merciless parody of the Gordonstoun elements in the Borstal philosophy. The idea that what is good for a public-school boy (who is at the same time told that he is the future ruling élite) *must* be good for the working-class boy (who doesn't have to be told that he is bottom of the heap) is brilliantly exposed in the Governor's line about putting a boy in a difficult situation so that we can see what his mettle is. This is even better done at the end of the film when the public school-boys admit that they too are beaten and

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not allowed to smoke. The disparities in the system for the occasion for some of the film's best moments, such as the cross-cutting between the singing of 'Jerusalem' and the brutal re-capture of an absconder. This sequence has been attacked as crude and propagandist, but it is no more so than Buñuel's contrast between the praying and the house-building in 'Viridiana'. Life is full of crude disparities, and a director would be stupid if he tried to deliver a powerful point in a gentle aside which would probably be missed by most of his audience.

But Richardson's technique is not successful throughout. He badly mauls what should be the most powerful sequence in the film—the final long-distance race. Here he seems determined to avoid any similarity with the ending of 'Les Quatre Cents Coups', and dissipates the tension by flashbacks over the boy's life. Yet if the audience doesn't sense by this time why the runner is about to make his gesture of defiance, they never will. And if the intention was to convey visually the thoughts going on inside the boy's head, the quick succession of fleeting images hardly succeeds. How much of this stems from Sillitoe's script is difficult to say, but two other scenes undermine the impact of the central theme. One is the parody of the paternalistic Prime Minister on TV. We should have learnt by now that Conservative Prime Ministers, the Church of England, etc., cannot be parodied: they are too adept at parodying themselves. Similarly, the Borstal concert, with its vicar, bird-impersonator and old-fashioned duettists, is embarrassing to watch, because the intentions of the film become too blatant.

These minor flaws add up to one cumulative point: we never really sense the 'loneliness' of the title. Because the practice runs and the actual race are used as vehicles for flashbacks into the boy's life—which, incidentally, contain the best take-and-drive-away sequence I've ever seen—we get less of the rhythm, the monotony, the sheer graft of a long-distance run than we do in the story. And the lush popsie who is introduced into the film as Colin's girl does undermine our sense of his isolation, even though she never softens the lens on Courtenay's old-young face. Richardson makes it all a bit too lyrical.

Yet enough of the story's qualities seep into the film to give it a toughness lacking in Richardson's other films. What Sillitoe's anger

In Alan Sillitoe's script for his "Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner" the censor objected to a scene where wardens kick a Borstal boy. Sillitoe feels that all censorship is to some degree political. "It's not the violence they object to, it's the questioning of authority."

—Sunday Telegraph, 11/3/62.

The philosophy behind this film, of course, is anarchistic; and anarchism has been the mainspring of many fine films (cf. Vigo, Bunuel, Franju). Yet the fineness of these films lies in the love they show for even a loathsome world; since, despite man's inability to construct a just society, the great anarchist directors have felt the need to celebrate the wonder of life, of man's ability to transcend his condition, if only aesthetically. But in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* there is no such escape.

—The Listener, 11/10/62.



and contempt are focussed on are the apostles of the Industrial Revolution, and his pity and respect are reserved for those who have been crippled by it. As in Osborne, a great deal of what might seem excessive mystique is attached to the dying father, riddled to the guts with some disease and obstinate to the last in refusing to be tampered with. And what Sillitoe despises and hates is not industrialisation, but the concomitant exploitation, inhumanity, false moralising and degradation of human beings who are then expected to be taken in by the 'You play ball with us and we'll play ball with you' philosophy. The dying father embodies the class struggle which persists whatever intellectuals are saying about it this year.

On with 'The Loneliness . . .' and supplementing it beautifully is a short documentary by John Krish called 'They Took Us to the Sea'. It is about a party of children under NSPCC care on a day-trip to Weston-Super-Mare. Slum children grow up in conditions which the rest of us experience only in war-time. The poignancy of this day-trip is brought over simply by concentration on the children's faces. Just for a day, they can stuff themselves with chips and ice-cream. The tatty sea-front is transformed through their eyes. Nobody could watch this film stoney-faced.



## Reflections on authority

**JEREMY WESTALL**

SOMEONE WHO IS REGARDED as *an* authority is a person who is competent and well versed in a specific subject. Sir Ivor Jennings is an authority on the Constitution. Sir Herbert Read is an authority on modern art. By this we acknowledge that these men are expert in their chosen fields, their views are considered even if they are not accepted. Doubt about some matter concerning the Constitution occasions one to consult Jennings due to his being an authority on the subject. Anarchists, in argument, may well refer to anarchist authorities: Rocker, Malatesta, Comfort—men with established reputations.

To *have* authority is an ability usually inherent in the make-up of certain individuals; this characteristic involves many small actions portraying a self-assured bearing and manner. A teacher can be said to have authority if his pupils are interested and co-operative without the use or threat of force. Chaos in a class-room is indicative of a lack of authority in the teacher. To have authority does not involve conceit or arrogance, it involves a firm, determined, self-assured manner which generates itself in the group involved.

To be *in* authority is to have powers of coercion; to be in a position where the wielding of power is a necessary part of one's life. The administrator is a man in authority and he attains such a position in one of three ways. He may seize power and assert his authority by compelling obedience in one way or another. He may be appointed by an authority already established, as with the Civil Service. Or he may be elected and is thus in authority by the consent of a voting populace. One who does not consent to the system of voting, or who does not recognise the authority which is established by any of the three means cited above, is still subject in the eyes of the law to a person *in* authority.

Anarchists, in speaking of a society without authority, must make the above distinctions clear. The anarchist can be *an* authority or he can *have* authority, but he can never be *in* authority.

The rôle assigned to authority for the anarchist is therefore one who represents a group without imposition and who respects the autonomy and opinions of others in that group. Only in small groups is such delegated authority possible, for in a larger group one will find at some stage that the will of a minority or a majority will have to be imposed in order to achieve "unity".

Thus anarchism envisages the development of small fluid groupings, with delegated authority only in the hands of a single person or a group for a certain specified time, no privilege being attached to such

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responsibility other than the natural goodwill that will be attached to the delegate. Our groupings will be co-ordinated by personal links forged by the groups' delegates.

Authority of this kind, recognised as essential by anarchists who none the less keep themselves thoroughly alive to the danger of its abuse, involves a certain amount of power. But it is a power that must coax and not coerce, educate not compel. We must all recognise the paradox that people *in* authority lack authority, in that they recognise their own weakness by having to lean on coercive power when their will is flouted.

## Reflections on freedom

**JOHN C. A. DAVEY**

ANARCHY, DECLARES THE POPULAR POLITICIAN, is the philosophy of criminals and sex-maniacs. In an anarchist society, where there are no morals, no laws, and no governments, these types thrive and can do as they please. It is a place, in other words, where all our hard-earned security is lost, and where everybody fends for himself in a useless and never-ending flight for survival. Take my advice, he says, and vote for a government.

Naturally enough, we take his advice and as a result we benefit from the security which is so dear to us and is given by our tradition of stable government. However, we are vaguely interested in this anarchy business (you know, it sounds rather romantic and all that) and so we look it up in the dictionary. The dictionary, we find, explains that anarchy equals no order, equals confusion, equals nil. From this, and from what we have already heard of them, we conclude that the anarchist himself is a nasty, rather untidy, little man who throws bombs at every opportunity, makes a nuisance of himself wherever he goes, and, oh yes, generally disturbs the peace.

All this has much the same effect on me as the dictionary definition of jazz—it gives me a feeling of utter despair and of red hot anger.

The true character of the anarchist has been revealed to us by short definitions in the last two issues of ANARCHY. But I do not see that these will have had much effect on the misconceptions of the majority, since they do not read ANARCHY, and in all probability, have never heard of it either. As a result one of the major tasks of the anarchist is explaining to enquirers the true meaning of anarchy. It is all very well to say simply, "Anarchy means the doing-away with all tyranny, and the giving of liberty to all", but the inevitable reply to

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*JOHN DAVEY recently left school where he edited a magazine with the superscription "if we have offended our offensive community, we are not offended."*

this is "But what shall I do with this liberty when I have it?"

It is my belief that the confusion results from believing that anarchy is an end in itself. It is not this, but a means to an end. Anarchy does not mean liberty, but empty liberty means not a thing—absolutely nothing.

It is a universal fallacy that liberty and freedom are the same. This is not at all the case. Liberty is merely a state of environment, while freedom is the result of personal achievement and is a state of existence; liberty is the last rung in the ladder before freedom. Becoming free is an immense task, and philosophers have provided an immense number of solutions to the problem, none of them easy. A common existentialist view of freedom is that of a never-ending series of decisions—a cycle of repetition. "Whoever fails to understand that life is repetition" said Nietzsche, "and that this is its beauty, has passed judgement on himself; he deserves no better fate than that which will befall him, namely to be lost."

And on the trials of choice, Kierkegaard wrote, "In general it is quite inconceivable how ingenious and inventive human beings can be in evading an ultimate decision. Anyone who has seen the curious antics of recruits when they are ordered into the water will often have had occasion to perceive analogies in the realm of the spirit." And on the importance of choice: "Nobody can be free unless he knows what to do." (John McMurray: *Freedom in the Modern World*).

It is impossible to define freedom in detail, for freedom is entirely personal and up to the individual himself. This is why Nietzsche's idea of freedom probably sounds very unsuitable for ourselves; but to him it was a revelation, a release, the discovery of his life. One of the most successful attempts to describe freedom was that made by McMurray:

"Self realisation is the true moral ideal. But to realise ourselves we have to be ourselves, to make ourselves real. That means thinking and feeling really, for ourselves, and expressing our own reality in word and action. And this is freedom, and the secret of it lies in our capacity for friendship."

But the half-convinced anarchist, having discovered the meaning of anarchy, will now question the morals of human beings when freed from all law. For one thing, there is no such thing as a moral law, and it is my belief that the so-called "basic evilness" of mankind is not basic at all, but the reaction to centuries of oppression. The idea that to be free is to be moral and to be moral is to be free, is argued by McMurray (again in *Freedom in the Modern World*). To be a good human being is to realise true human nature in oneself; that is to say to be really human in one's way of living. This is the same thing as to be free, for anything is free that realises its now proper nature spontaneously in its behaviour. Thus to be moral and to be free are the same thing. Instead of saying that any freedom is bad which is immoral, we ought to say that any moral is bad that is against freedom. A moral rule which is a limit to human freedom is a bad rule. Freedom is the criterion of good conduct.

**Tony Gibson**

## **YOUTH FOR FREEDOM: FREEDOM FOR YOUTH**

This challenging pamphlet, by a research psychologist with many years of teaching experience behind him, is sub-titled "A consideration of the factors influencing the development of a free and socially effective youth". It begins with some reflections on the significance of education, and the second chapter, on "The Revolt in the School" describes the work of three progressive schools, the Burgess Hill School of ten years ago, Neill's Summerhill, and St. George-in-the-East Secondary School in the period of Alex Bloom's headship. The third chapter discusses the nature of the young child, the fourth is on "The Child Rebel" and the brilliant final chapter is on the Adolescent. The author concludes that

"Young people sense that there is a conspiracy of age against youth, and they are right. Too much is preached about the responsibilities which adolescents must learn to accept, responsibilities which involve going like cattle into the military corral, sweating as underpaid apprentices, grinding at studies to make themselves more efficient units of production, denying their lusty sexuality when it is at its height, dutifully fulfilling the vicarious ambitions of their parents. We are not going to preach social revolution as another *duty* which the young generation have got to shoulder. Our message to the young is entirely one of encouragement, of realizing the value of their own aspirations, of spurning the burdens that authority would place upon them and the shoddy rewards cynically offered in return for the sacrifice of their own natures. Emotionally frustrated boys and girls turn to idealism all too easily, but it is idealism of an impractical and sentimental kind. A youth who burns to sacrifice himself to a revolutionary cause may be as mentally sick as the one who burns to lay down his life for his king. It is no great task to capture the frustrated emotionalism of adolescence with bands and banners and songs but such mysticism is useless for truly revolutionary ends. Youth, disturbed in its natural harmony, is too willing to sacrifice, to *give*, we must show it how to *take*."

48 pages

two shillings

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